

August 5, 1974

Ms. Priscilla Houston
Housatonic, Massachusetts 02136

Dear Ms. Houston:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter from Dr. Ramos which expresses his reaction to Mr. Blashill's article. I chopped his letter at the point at which he goes into a discussion of one of his medical problems. In addition, I enclose a good translation of Mr. Blashill's paper keyed to the original by paragraph.

Dr. Ramos' comments speak for themselves and, in line with his terseness, I shall confine myself to only a few comments which may clarify my previous correspondence.

I regard the article as another example of modern journalism. There are enough inaccuracies and items out of context to raise doubts as to whether Mr. Blashill visited Palomares. I looked carefully for evidence that he had been there, but he does not say so. Indeed his references to details of the village are wide of their mark, especially geographically speaking.

The picture bears no relation to the Palomares of Almeria Province.

Evidently, he wrote this piece about 1969 or 1970 when the emigration due to the drought was taking place. Had he really interviewed the people he would have learned that the emigration would be temporary - that land is very, very important to the Spanish "agricultor." There is, however, some of the same trend in Spain seen elsewhere for the young people to go to the cities or even to other European countries. Now that the drought is broken, however, many of the young people have returned and the village has resumed a rhythm set by three crops of premium tomatoes per year.

In the matter of compensation, the Spanish Government immediately sent its own assessors to the site to ensure that the people were properly recompensed. The U. S. paymasters settled those claims at once. The claims

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reported by Mr. Blashill are those filed subsequently; here, too, payments made or offered by the U. S. were those recommended by the Spanish governmental assessors.

As to Dr. Ramos, I wish you could see how the people of Palomares greet him and insist he stop and have a glass of wine, etc.; he really has to conduct an informal out-patient clinic every time he visits. He has told them that he thinks they have nothing to worry about, but he will continue to do whole body counting and monitoring of the environment for radioisotope contamination in order to be sure that it is absent or so low as to be barely detectable. He can do no less - nor would any other reputable scientist-physician be categorical when dealing with this first-of-its-kind situation. Physicians often are hard put to be factually honest with patients who wish to believe that dire things are happening to them or vice versa.

Palomares has electricity, telephones, and ought by now to be receiving TV programs from Murcia.

It appears that this story caused no problems for the Junta Energia Nuclear and my own reaction is, "So let it be with Caesar."

I do appreciate your calling this article to our attention.

Sincerely,

H. D. Bruner, M.D.
Special Assistant to the
Chairman

Enclosures:

1. Cy Dr. Ramos ltr
2. Translation of Blashill
article